



## DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY

### PRESS RELEASE

FEBRUARY 16, 2005

### **STATE DATABASE CONTRIBUTES TO DECLINE IN UNINSURED MOTORISTS**

Recent figures from the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety (DMVS) show that the implementation of the Georgia Electronic Insurance Compliance System (GEICS) has had a positive effect on lowering the number of uninsured motorists in Georgia. Of the 6,797,459 vehicles requiring insurance, 97.5% have acceptable insurance. This lowers the number of uninsured drivers to approximately 166,593 vehicles or 2.5%. Although it is difficult to accurately gauge the number of drivers operating without insurance before the database, estimates range from 15-30%.

"This strategy to battle uninsured motorists has proven valuable. The DMVS project team, along with our County Tax Commissioner partners and the insurance industry, has worked tirelessly to implement this program. A major goal was to eliminate any inconvenience for those drivers who always strive to maintain continuous liability insurance," said James R. Davis, DMVS Commissioner.

Since January 1, 2004, Georgia motorists have been required to be registered in the legislatively mandated electronic verification system that enables law enforcement to access insurance verification data from their vehicles through the state run database. GEICS compares the data received from insurance companies and matches it against the state's tag and title database. It requires that each vehicle identification number (VIN) on your vehicle's registration card or tag receipt match the vehicle identification number on your insurance card. If the two numbers match, the database will indicate a valid match when checked by law enforcement or when purchasing a tag. If the lengthy alphanumeric number is even one digit off, there is a problem. The DMVS quickly established an on-line service for owners to verify their vehicle's inclusion in the database via **[www.dmv.ga.gov](http://www.dmv.ga.gov)**.

Motorists are still provided insurance cards and are legally required to continue to carry them. They continue to be very important should you become involved in a traffic accident or travel out of state.

### **Penalties Enforced**

In April 2004, DMVS began notifying motorists who failed to maintain continuous coverage of a possible fee or pending suspension. Approximately 275,000 letters were mailed in April giving recipients until May 1<sup>st</sup> to respond or face suspensions. If there is a registration suspension and it is the first occurrence, the vehicle's registered owner must obtain and keep continuous Georgia liability insurance coverage on their vehicle; pay a lapse fee of \$25.00; pay a \$60.00 reinstatement fee; and pay any other registration fees and vehicle ad valorem taxes due, if it is during the owner's registration period. Fees paid to the state or county tag office are submitted to the department, less the tag agent's fee, and deposited to the state general fund.

The law has additional penalties for those drivers that have a second or subsequent suspension during any five-year period. Starting April 1, 2005, the DMVS will suspend the vehicle registration for a period of 90 days when a vehicle owner has allowed his registration to suspend for a second time. When the vehicle owner receives one of these letters, the vehicle cannot be operated on the roads of this state until the 90-day suspension period has elapsed and

the \$25 lapse fee and \$60 restoration fee has been paid plus any vehicle ad valorem taxes that may be due if it is during their registration period.

The law requires the suspension of the vehicle's registration for six-months when it is the third or subsequent occurrence within any five-year period. Starting April 1, 2005, the vehicle's registered owner must obtain and keep continuous Georgia liability insurance coverage on their vehicle; pay a \$25.00 lapse fee and a \$160.00 reinstatement fee plus any vehicle ad valorem taxes that may be due if it is during their registration period; not drive the vehicle for six-months after the registration was suspended. Additional penalties will apply if the vehicle's registered owner is convicted of driving a vehicle with a suspended or cancelled registration.

Anyone needing to resolve their suspension or who has questions or concerns needs to contact their insurance company and their County Tax Commissioner's office for assistance immediately.